

**Title** Commercial development of some native bulbs  
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### **Abstract**

Southeast Asia is a center of genetic diversity of several types of bulbous flowering plants including *Costus*, *Curcuma*, *Crinum*, *Elingera*, *Globba* and *Zingiber*. However, only some of these plants are suitable for commercial development as ornamental crops in the world market. In order to be developed for large scale production in the ornamental market, a plant should be genetically diverse with a wide variety of attractive colors and forms. It should be fast growing with a good yield of flowers, but should not be overly bulky or heavy, so that it is easy to package and transport. There should be appropriate technology developed to allow fast, disease-free propagation. Of the above-mentioned plants, *Curcuma* is one tropical flowering bulb that has good potential for commercial development and has already been developed to some degree, but there is still much more opportunity for market expansion. *Curcuma* is genetically diverse, with more than 20 species that have potential for use as ornamental plants. It is possible to hybridize between species. Technology is available to support further breeding work and fast, pathogen-free propagation. The National Research Council of Thailand has supported research in *Curcuma* breeding. However, for the continued development of flowering bulbs it is essential to constantly have new varieties in the pipeline, because the ornamental plant market is dictated by fashion. Trends in the popularity of different varieties change very quickly. Growers must always seek to find something new and different to attract the attention of buyers. If nothing but the same old products are offered for sale, the market will stagnate and shrink. Besides *Curcuma* breeding, more work needs to be done in the commercial development of other native bulbs. Researchers should turn their attention to other bulbous plants with good characteristics that can lend themselves to commercial development on a larger scale. One example is *Globba*. At present more research is being done to develop new *Globba* varieties, improve propagation methods, make the production system more efficient and expand the *Globba* markets.